Secdt. H-37—100,000—23-8-48.

FOOD (1948) Department.

Ms. SERIES.

G.O. No. 136

Dated 20.2.1948.

[Despatch Abstract.]

COMMITTEES - Provincial Food Advisory Committeec- Second meeting on 10-2-48 Agenda, note on the subject included in the agenda - Proceedings - Papers - REcorded.

PROVINCIAL FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Provincial Advisory Committee was held in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, Madras, at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, the 10th February 1948. The Hon. Sri O.P. Ramaswami Reddiar, Premier, the Hon. Dr.T.S.S. Rajan, Minister for Food, and the Hon. Sri K. Madhava Menon, Minister for Agriculture, were present.

At the outset the Hon. Dr. T.S.S. Rajan introduced to the Hon. the Premier the members of the gathering. He then moved the following resolution on the demise of Mahatma Gandhi.

> 'This meeting of the members of the Provincial Food Advisory Committee places on record its deep sense of sorrow on the sudden and untimely demise of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, and decides to continue the work planned by him for the achievement and maintenance of freedom by concord and harmony and goodwill amongst our people'.

The resolution was adopted unanimously, all members standing.

The Premier then addressed the gathering. He said that since the Committee met last time, the situation now had become worse. In the southern districts, there was no proper yield on account of the failure of seasonal rains. The yield of dry crops also was poor. Only four or five districts were surplus districts and the rest were all deficit. Controls had been removed consequent on the decision of the Government of India in the matter. The Food Minister to the Government of India would be coming to Madras on the 14th instant, and the whole matter would be discussed with him. Madras Province was a deficit Province in the matter of food grains even in the best of seasons to the tune of six lakhs of tons. Now on account of the failure of the monsoon and other causes, the deficit was more. 21 lakhs of tons were nedessary to meet the requirements of Madras Province. The Government of India promised to supply only about 1¼ lakhs of tons. Their position was also difficult, because other nations took advantage of our country's difficult position, and demanded exorbitant prices for the foodstuffs they sold, whereas they were supplying at a cheaper rate to Great Britain. Merchants, on account of war profits they made, had become extraordinarily greedy, and they also exploited the situation to the maximum extent. The officials also had become corrupt. All these things led to the withdrawal of rationing in certain areas. The mirasdars were responsible for black-marketing. The publid did not co-operate with the Government in as full a measure as was expected of them in helping the Government to book the offenders against rationing and procurement rules. Government, however, had to be carried on in these circumstances. In December 1947 rural rationing was given up.

In conclusion, the Premier appealed to those present to help the Government to tide over the crisis. He wished that the famine overtook Bengal some time back should not take place in Madras. He appealed to them all to co-operate with Government whole-heartedly.

The Hon. Dr. T.S.S. Rajan, speaking next, set out the object of summoning the committee to meet on that day. He said that they were meeting just in advance of the Budget Session of the Legislature only with a view to eliciting the views and opinions of the members assembled there with regard to the food policy of the Government. Government, however, had reports from the officials about the effects of decontrol. But he believed that the members, coming as they did, from the various districts would be able to give their own views of the matter, and help Government by offering their suggestions and criticisms. Last year, the Government of India expressed inability to meet our demands, fully, They supplied only about two lakhs and 40 thousands tons against the deficit of 6½ lakhs of tons. The result was that Minister had to tour all the districts appealing to the people to surrender all their surplus to avoid the threatened breakdown of rationing, and its inevitable consequences. The response was really good, and they were able

P.T.O....

to tide over the crisis. Whereas last year, it was only a question of 6 lakhs of tons of rice, this year it was a deficit of 21 lakhs of tons. This was due to the failure of moonsoon and alos due to the intensive procurement having been made from the producers, last year. He desired the committee to advise him as to how to make up this huge deficit this year. If there were any resources left untapped, or hidden from his view, the members might bring them to his notice. They might also suggest to him other suitable methods of distributn of foodgrains, if any, they had any in view. The members might also suggest ways and means of growing more food within the next few months, keeping in view the difficulties of water supply and the like. Unlike last year, this year they could not procure all the foodgrains with the producers. They proposed to leave a margin with the producers towards their requirements of seed, food, and also a stock of three months' food requirments. Only the surplus would be procured. The question of going to the Government of India for help could arise only after they had exhausted all possible sources within the Province itself. The Governor General of India and the Governor of Madras had impressed on the Government of India the imperative need to help this Province. As a result of this, the Govt. of India had agreed to supply four lakhs of tons, and they had also promised to consider the question of further quantities.

The Government knew that the quantity of rations that they were issuing to the people was not commensurate with the physiological requirements. But, that could not be helped. They could at present only ward off starvation.

Speaking on the facilities for irrigation, the Hon. Minister said that the reservoirs in Madura and Tinnevelly (Srivaikuntam tank and Periyar reservoir) had been put to considerable use with the help of electric power.

As the cost of production had become high, last year, the Madras Government recommended to the Govt. of India an increase of in the price of paddy about Rs.2/-. But that was not accepted by the Govt. of India. Therefore, the members had now in arriving at a fair price, to take into consideration the capacity of the purchaser to pay for the foodstuffs he required. If they could manage the situation well till September, he expected no difficulty later.

Proceeding, the Hon. Dr. T.S.S. Rajan appealed to the members to give their opinions and suggestions to meet the acute famine in Ramnad and Tinnevelly, and minor famine in a few other districts like Chittoor. In Malabar, people would not take any other food grain than rice. The responsibility for feed ng Malbar could never be shirked. Even though millets and maize were unwelcome, they could not but take them.

They had to consider four things, namely, proper production, sufficient Central storage pace, equitable distribution of the food grains and a fair price for the produce. If they approached the Govt. of India for more foodgrains, the Govt. of India, in their turn, had to look to other nations for help. Therefore, it was incumbent on the people of Madras to produce their own requirements. Quick production of foodgrains meant manure and good seed, which at present they did not have.

In conclusion, the Food Minister requested the members present to give their criticisms and valuable suggestions bearing the foregoing in mind.

P.T.O.

(The Press, at this stage, was asked to withdraw).

Mr. A.S. Kuppuswamy Iyer(Tinnevelly district) pointed out that heavily deficit districts like Tinnevelly had to be treated on a special footing different from all other districts. At present, there was the ban on the inter-district movement of foodgrains between surplus districts and deficit districts. This ban, he felt, should go. When rural rationing was taken away in Dec.1947 there was a very great scramble for rations. He cited the instance of Nanguneri taluk in this connection. He said that Nanguneri taluk required a supply of 390 tons every week when rationing was in force, and after rationing had been taken away, the quantity it received was only about 50 tons per week. Consequently there was a very great scramble for rations. In the matter of issue of rations also, officials were shown some patronage at the expense of the public. The public were left to drift. His suggestion to Government would be that even though rationing was taken away, it would be necessary to employ the same methods which were in force before derationing so that whatever quantity of foodgrains was received in the relief shops might be distributed equitably and in a fair manner to all the people. The deficit districts in the South, namely, Madura, Ramnad, Tinnevelly and Trichinopoly, and a portion of Tanjore district might be formed into one group for the movement of foodgrains. At present, Koilpatti, a border taluk, was getting supplies of paddy from Madura district by illicit means. This too was in a way helpful to relieve the suffering felt by the people. In the interior taluks, the position was very critical. In the circumstances, he felt that the ban on the movement of foodgrains between districts should be removed, subject, of course, to the condition that procurement operations by Government were not in any way handicapped. If total removal of the ban was not possible, he desired that it should be removed at least between the months of May and December. The districts in the West Coast also might form into another group, called the Western Group. The suggestions given in respect of the Southern group might be tried in the Western group also.

As regards supplies by the Govt. of India, the member continued, greater pressure must be brought to bear on them to pay more attention to the demands of Madras Province. When the deficit had risen from 6 lakhs of tons to 21 lakhs of tons, the plea of want of dollar exchange, the limited supplies available; &c. should not be put forward. The members from Madras in the Central Legislature should exert pressure on the Govt. of India in the matter, and it was necessary on the part of every one to see that the Bengal tragedy did not take place in Madras Province.

Regarding the Grow More Food campaigns, Mr. Kuppuswamy Iyer felt that all that was necessary and could be easily done was not being done. He drew the attention of the Government to the fact that irrigation sources and tanks had been greatly neglected. A number of channels did not have good shutters with the result much of the water supply was being wasted. He did not mind if there were no screw shutters, but even wooden shutters were not to be found in many channels. This required the immediate attention of the Government. The Tank Restoration Scheme, which had been given up long before, should be revived.

The Premier, interrupting, pointed out to the speaker, that these things could not be taken up immediately for want of adequate staff. (Overseers)

Mr. Kuppuswamy Iyer continuing said that in Ramnad and Tinnevelly districts, there were many areas in which paddy could be cultivated. But, at present, those lands were being used for growing money crops.

P.T.O.....

could be procured. By fixing such a high figure, he feared that there would be unnecessary harassment in procurement. He wished that the target was fixed at as approximately as correct figure as possible.

The Food Secretary in reply said that as far as the exportable surplus was concerned, it was put only at 19,000 tons. As regards the target of 172,000 tons, it was put at that figure, because Government expected a greater yield this year from that district, and more efficient procurement. These were the reasons why the target was fixed at a high figure.

Mr. Vellingiri Gounder, speaking next, said that people in rural parts felt greatly relieved when rationing was taken away on 28th December 1947. In fact they felt they were enjoying Independence from that day. There might be difficulties in urban areas on account of rationing. He was opposed to rationing tooth nail ~~tei~~-be it partial rationing or statutory rationing. He felt that derationing in rural parts would relieve the difficulties in urban areas by enabling the people to ~~rural~~ move on to rural areas. Or, if that were not possible, people might migrate to places where they could get their requirements conveniently. If there was a famine, his suggestions would ~~not~~ be put to force into force the provisions of the Famine Code and help the masses, just as Government were doing when famines broke out in olden days. He was more than sure that nobody would die of starvation if rationing was removed throughout. He wanted that there should be free trade by normal trade channels. Government, if necessary, might purchase in the open market and move that produce to places where there was famine. Going to other countries for help was a sheer waste of money. Storage of grains also meant great damage, if the grains were not used in proper time. All these things only showed that rationing should be given up.

As regards grow more Food Campaigns, Mr. Vellingiri Gounder said that the plea of paucity of staff to take up small irrigation works could not be sustained. If Overseers were not available, his suggestion would be to make the officers superior to Overseers to attend to the work of Overseers. Government, should concentre on improving the irrigation tanks and channels. For the time being, major works might as well be kept in abeyance, and small irrigation works should be attended to immediately.

With these words, Mr. Vellingiri Gounder resumed his seat.

The Committee then adjourned to meet again at 2.30 p.m.

/True Copy/

PROVINCIAL FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AFTER LUNCH

The Hon. Sri K. MADHAVAN MENON appealed to the laading agriculturists who had assembled there to inform the Government what they should do immediately. The Government had their long-range policy; but it will not give us necessary food immediately. The chief difficulty is we had not enough water. All the minor irrigation works cannot be repaired immediately. Threefore, they must concentre upon intensive cultivation in existing areas. That can be done only by two processes, one is manuring the other is using improved strains. They had not enough groundnut cake with them and it would not reahh the actual ryot in time according to the bonus coupon system. According to the figures of the Board of Revenue, 20 per cent of the ground-nut crop has failed. Therefore, they should use green manures. By this method they could increase the yield by about 30 per cent.

P.T.O...

Mr. Madhava Menon appealed to the members to help the Government by carrying on vigorous propaganda to use green manure The Director of Agriculture would fix a fair price for green manure seeds, taking into consideration the market rate also.

Sri G. Brahmayya (addressing the House in Telugu) stressed the point that this Committee as a whole was for de-control. The figures supplied to them were not correct. There was no decrease in yield, there was more production of food and they could export more food. The Collectors had been asked to procure food-grains within two months. If the ryots gave paddy instead of rice, cattle would be deprived of thavudi etc. There should be trade between district to district in surplus districts. Green manure seeds should be supplied in time to the ryots. As they were all members of a united family, the ryots would not ask for more prices for their produce.

Sri K.A. Nachiappa Gounder observed that as a result of de-control, rural areas were quite happy. People in Municipal areas also desire that rationing should go. The quantity that was being given to people was not sufficient and they had to go to the balck market and pay high prices for the quantity they required.

The present price was not quite attractive; therefore, the acreage under paddy had gone down. People have taken to other crops. The Government should provide all facilities to the agriculturists to produce more food. They should carry on propaganda that the produce might be increased, by having demonstrations in their own farms.

Distribution and collection of food-grains must be done through co-operative societies. The Government should take sufficient predautions to see that there is no agrarian trouble. They have not made serious attempts to get agricultural implements and distribute them among the agriculturists.

Mr. Gounder pointed out that the cost of production would be less if electricity was available and that lang-range policies also should be given effect to side by side.

Sri M.S. SIVARAMAN (Director of Agriculture) remarked that the Hon. Minister for Agriculture had stressed what he considered to be practical ways of improving our food production immediately. As a result of the failure of the monsoon our wells are dry and our tanks do not have sufficient water. Therefore, it was not possible to bring large areas under green manure as we originally contemplated. There might be haavier summer showers this year as often happens, when the north east monsoon fails. Then we could grow green manure crops. If there were good showers, kuruvai crops might be raised, We have a large area under the Cauveri-Mettur project from which green manure crops might be raised. Two lakhs of acres under this project are single crop lands; on these lands green manure crops might be raised. The Agricultural Department can supply the seeds for raising these crops. My Department might be able to supply 10,000 bags of these seeds, and it has deconstrated in different places how these crops might be raised. It would be a good thing if members of this Committee carried on propaganda in this matter. Green manure crops might be raised on the bunds of fields. It might be said that the bunds were narrow and used for walking purposes. Still, there are left large bunds on which these crops might be raised.

P.T.O.

The Government could be sure of procuring food-grains from the surplus districts. As all the communications were in the hands of the Government, the ryots would not abe able to take even one bag of rice from the Kistna district.

Sri Cunniah Chetti observed that there was much delay in the matter of repairs of small irrigation works. Drainage facilities also should be provided. There was cases of bribery among officials. There should be propaganda among the villagers for the production of green manure.

Sri Vagheesam Pillai urged that bonus should be given to ryots till September.

Sri Brahmanandam Reddi pointed out that the figures supplied to members were not correct. There was no need to get panicky and all. Agricultural demonstrators should be asked to do their legitimate work. Spending money on wells has been a waste.. The Government should get manure from other countries. Mr. Reddi disagreed with his friends and sais that whatever foodgrains had to be procured, had to be procured within two months.

Sri Srinivasa Ayyangar said that the unanimous opinion of people of the Trichinopoly District was that control even in the municipal areas must go. There was apprehension among the people that water would not be given in the summer months. Sufficient publicity should be given to the fact that paddy crops should be raised in the Trichinopoly district and that water would be supplied.

Sri Ramachandra Reddi suggested that a resolution consolidating the ideas expressed by members, might be passed.

Bringing the proceedings to a close, Dr. Rajan thanked the members for the observations made by them. The matter would be placed before the Legislature whose decision would be final. The Food Minister of the Government of India was expected here on the 14th.

Dr. Rajan pointed out that there was clamour for control from non-producers. The newspapers also were strongly criticising the policy regarding food control. The Government were very anxious to see that there was no deaths due to starvation. There was no necessity for any resolution being passed. The Government would consider all the views put forward.

The meetng then adjourned.

/True Copy/

Government of Madras.
Public (Information and Publicity) Deptt.

PRESS RELEASE DATED 11THEFEBRUARY 1948.

The Provincial Food Advisory Committee that met yesterday had a general discussion for about five hours on the situation arising from partial decontrol. The Committee was unanimous in its recommendation that the introduction of complete decontrol should be expedited. Some members pointed out that there should be rigid controls or absolute de-control but no middle course between the tw, and that partial decontrol combined the disadvantages of both without the advantages of either. Great emphasis was laid on the necessity for allowing normal trade channels to function, and the lifting of the ban on-inter-district movement.

P.T.O.. ...

In the course of the discussion, several suggestions were made to help increased food production. It was pointed out that controls had taken away the incentive to production, and that with the lifting of controls, production will increase, The importance of attending to minor irrigation works and the necessity for maintaining them at optimum efficiency level was stressed. It was/ also suggested that the Agricultural Department of the Government could more actively help ~~the~~ and advise the ryot with regard to improved methods of cultivation.

On the question of granting a bonus to the producer divergent views were expressed, by some of the members holding that no useful purpose would be served by payment of such bonuses.

The Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture made an appeal to those present to do active propaganda and popularise the use of green manure. The Director of Agriculture pointed out that green manure crops and shrubs could be profitably grown on bunds of lands. He also suggested that more of tubers like potato, tapioca, and country potatos could be grown. The suggestion was also made that a relaxation of the rules, by way of making manure available to non-bonus coupon holders also, would greatly help the ryots.

The Hon'ble Minister for Food winding up the proceedings of the Committee, promised to consider the various suggestions of the Committee. In this connection, he pointed out that side by side with popular support for decontrol, there was an increased clamour for control, from certain sections of the Public and the Press, and said that this could not be ignored. He referred to the forthcoming visit to Madras of the Hon'ble Sri Jairamdas Doulatram, Food Minister, Government of India. He thanked the members for their helpful and constructive suggestions and appealed to them always to extend their co-operation to the Government.

The Committee concluded its deliberations at about 6-30 P.M.

sd. C.V. Hanumantha Rao,
Director of Information & Publicity.

/True Copy/

xxx

After taking action as indicated in the preceding paragraph, the papers may be Recorded for facility of future reference. It does not appear necessary to furnish each member of the P.F.A.C with a copy of the proceedings.
For orders.

~~SD~~ xxxx
~~SD~~ (Secretary).

G.O. Ms. No 136 Dt. 20.2.1948.

(True Copy)

Recorded.
Committee - P.F.A.C - Records
meetings on 10.2.1948 - Agenda -
note on the subject included
in the Agenda, proceedings - Papers
Recorded.

Office Assistant,
Madras Rural Office.

NOTE FOR CIRCULATION

Sri V.C. Vellingiri Gounder, Vellakkinar Village, Coimbatore district, Member of Provincial Food Advisory Committee has expired and his seat on the Committee has fallen vacant. In consultation with H.M.(Food) it has been decided that Sri V.C. Palaniswami Gounder, M.L.A., Coimbatore, who is the brother of the deceased may be nominated on the Commitee in the vacancy.

It has also been decidéd in consultation with H.M.(Food) that Sri V. Kodandarama Reddy, Thottapalli, Gudur Taluk, Nellore district may also be taken into the Provincial Food Advisory Committee.

A draft memo nominating the above gentlemen on the Provincial Food Advisory Commiteee is submitted below. The file may be circulated to H.M.(Food) and H.Pr. for approval of the draft.

sd.x x x,
20-1-49

H.M.(Food) sd.x.x x, 20-1-1949.
H.Premier sd.x x x, 20-1-1949.

The papers may now be added to the G.O.136, Food, dated 20-2-1948 at flag (G).

sd. x x x,
31-1-1949.

/True Copy/

RS/30/1/1954

OFFICE ASSISTANT,
MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.